

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Date: August 26, 2005

Project: U.S. Route 460 Coalfields Connector
State Project Number: 0460-013-120
UPC 64144

Issuing/Using Agency: Virginia Department of Transportation
Innovative Project Delivery Division
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

I. INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is seeking Statements of Interest (SOI) from private entities (Respondents) that are qualified and experienced with development and/or operation of highway facilities, or related development and heavy construction. A carefully structured partnership could result in greater economic development, greater mobility, reduced environmental impacts, and reduced costs for the Project. VDOT anticipates utilizing mineral resource information, new studies and partnerships to identify possible modifications in the proposed alignment to capture existing resources available to finance or enhance the Project, and is particularly open to partnerships that include coal companies. The Project will use federal funds, and must comply with applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations.

VDOT will consider responses to this Request for Information (RFI) and determine whether to solicit conceptual proposals under the design-build law, or the Public-Private Transportation Act of 1995 (PPTA), as amended, or other alternative procurement methods for constructing all or part(s) of the U.S. Route 460 Coalfields Connector between the Kentucky state line and the proposed Coalfields Expressway. VDOT is considering a future solicitation utilizing alternative procurement methods because of the potential for risk sharing, non-public funding, and other economic benefits which would not otherwise be available through a traditional procurement process.

II. BACKGROUND

The U.S. Route 460 Coalfields Connector project is a planned four-lane, median divided highway along a new location. The current alignment, as generally shown in Attachment A of this RFI, starts in Buchanan County at the Bull Gap interchange of the proposed Coalfields Expressway, proceeding generally in a northwesterly direction for 4.2 (\pm) miles and connecting with the U.S. 460 Connector in Pikesville County, Kentucky. VDOT is presently in the preliminary engineering phase for the project, which will link

the first segment of the Coalfields Expressway and Route 460 in Kentucky, and will improve access to the Breaks Interstate Park, in Dickenson County.

FHWA-Virginia Division issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Virginia's 460 Coalfields Connector project on March 26, 2002. FHWA-Kentucky Division issued a FONSI for Kentucky's Route 460 project on January 26, 1999. Kentucky's Route 460 project begins at U.S. Route 23 near Yeager, Kentucky and terminates near the Virginia state line at Route 631.

VDOT and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) entered into an agreement in 2001 for the design, construction and funding of the connection of the project at the state line. The current schedule is for the completion of the connection in 2010. Coordination of the connection of the U.S. Route 460 Coalfields Connector at the Kentucky state line is a vital component of this project.

Virginia's Route 460 Coalfields Connector is a proposed four-lane highway with a grass median. The lane width is proposed to be 12 feet with an eight foot median shoulder, 13 foot fill shoulder and 10 foot cut shoulder. The proposed design speed is 60 miles per hour and the highway's functional classification is Rural Principal Arterial. The Project was approved with a corridor width of 700 feet.

The Project is located in very steep, rugged, mountainous terrain which is moderately populated. The proposed alignment will be cutting the residual soils and rock of the Pennsylvanian age Wise and Norton Formations. These formations are composed of intertwined and layered sandstone, shale and siltstone with numerous coal beds.

III. INSTRUCTION FOR RESPONSES

Respondents should submit a concise SOI not exceeding five (5) pages in length and which demonstrates a clear understanding of the issues associated with the project and communicates the respondent's suggestions for structuring a public-private partnership. The SOI should include the following:

- 1) A brief statement of interest/no interest in pursuing such a project with VDOT.
- 2) Identify topics or issues regarding the US Route 460 Coalfields Connector not addressed by the RFI that respondents believe are important to address in any future RFP, and offer input on those topics or issues.
- 3) A list of additional information that would assist your firm in its evaluation of interest for future participation in the project.
- 4) Suggestions for the structure of a public-private partnership. In particular, note how such a partnership may optimize the alignment based on sound highway

engineering principles, accommodate coal mining activities, minimize land disturbance activities in the region, and maximize coal revenue to offset road construction costs. Such a partnership must result in a work program and project that is acceptable to the Federal Highway Administration.

- 5) Consider the applicability of a grant or loan from the Transportation Partnership Opportunity Fund (TPOF). How would funds of up to \$1.5 million from the TPOF be used to initiate necessary engineering, environmental and financial studies to determine the viability of such a public-private partnership?

VDOT is not requesting a proposal, detailed plans, budgetary information or proprietary information in response to this RFI. However, Respondents should address the issues and opportunities presented by this Project and as described below.

It is envisioned that private entities will engage in partnerships with commercial enterprises, including the mineral recovery industries, economic development councils or other appropriate organizations to seek opportunities to finance or reduce the net cost of the Project. It is further envisioned that materials or recoverable minerals will be used to finance or reduce the effective cost of the Project. The Respondents should seek to optimize the materials and minerals available to finance or enhance the Project.

In addition, Respondents may consider innovative engineering or construction methods for the use of materials, recovery of minerals and construction of the highway. In evaluating the use of any proposed innovative engineering or construction methods which vary in any way from VDOT's standard specifications as described in the *Road and Bridge Specifications, 2002, as amended*, Respondents should consider testing and verification methods for the innovative techniques proposed.

The Respondents may also consider ancillary development as part of this Project. Ancillary development shall be on, adjacent or connected to the Project right-of-way. Ancillary development may also consist of development not directly adjacent or connected to the Project right-of-way, but which is made possible only by the implementation of the Respondent's proposal.

Ancillary development contemplated as part of this Project may consist of roads, site work, commercial or non-commercial enterprises, including surface mines, multimodal transportation facilities, or any other developmental activity which may provide additional resources to support the Project or may provide economic or public benefits to the community in which it is located or to the region as a whole. Any ancillary development must, however, comply with all federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations governing such matters.

Respondents may further consider methods by which credit, reimbursement or other compensation will be utilized for the use of materials or recoverable minerals in support of the Project. The general characteristics of said method must provide for a form of

accounting and verification of the quantities of materials and minerals used or recovered, and the credits, reimbursements or payments to be made.

Respondents should also consider scheduling issues associated with coordination of the connection of Route 460 at the Kentucky state line and with Segment A of the proposed Coalfields Expressway. Phased construction concepts or segmenting the proposed project should be discussed in any submission to this RFI.

SOI's shall be submitted by 4:00 P.M., prevailing local time, on Friday, September 30, 2005, by mail to:

Virginia Department of Transportation
Attention: Charles E. Kostro, Program Manager
Innovative Project Delivery Division
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Responses are to be sealed in mailing envelopes bearing the respondent's name, address, and the words "US Route 460 Coalfields Connector" clearly written on the outside.

VDOT's point of contact is Mr. Charles E. Kostro, Program Manager, Innovative Project Delivery Division, and may be reached at (804) 371-4316.

IV. VDOT'S RIGHTS RESERVED

VDOT reserves all rights available to it by federal and state law. If a PPTA or other type of solicitation results from this RFI, respondents to this RFI are hereby notified that all information, documentation, and any specific content or approaches included in RFI responses may be used in the resulting solicitation. Therefore, do not submit any copyrighted, proprietary or confidential information.

Ownership of all data, material, and documentation originated and submitted to VDOT, pursuant to the RFI, shall belong exclusively to VDOT and be subject to public inspection in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

The intent of this RFI is to seek SOI's only. Therefore, responses will not be considered to be a binding bid or proposal. If VDOT decides to issue an RFP, those parties who choose not to respond to this RFI will not be denied participation in the RFP. If VDOT decides to advance the US Route 460 Coalfields Connector project with a different scope than presented in the SOI's received from the respondents to this RFI, respondents will not be denied participation in the RFP process.

Unsolicited proposals for the advancement of the U.S. Route 460 Coalfields Connector project, or any similar project, under the PPTA will not be accepted from the date of issuance of this RFI, and will be returned to sender.

Under no circumstances shall the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Transportation Board, the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner, or VDOT be liable for, or reimburse, the costs incurred by Respondents, whether or not VDOT, in its sole discretion, chooses to solicit proposals for US Route 460 Coalfields Connector project.

ATTACHMENT A
PROJECT AREA MAP
ROUTE 460 COALFIELDS CONNECTOR

